

Environnement
CanadaEnvironnement
Canada

Canada

Français

Contact Us

Help

Search

Canada Site

What's New

Topics

Publications

Weather

Home

About Us

About
LEVEL news**Contents**High Great Lakes
Water Levels
Expected for Spring
1997IJC Takes
Measures to Deal
With High Lake
Ontario Levels
Lake St. Clair Level
Rises Quickly
Public Meetings
January
PrecipitationWater Levels for the
Great Lakes and
Montreal Harbour
... a monthly bulletin
from Canadian
Hydrographic
ServiceAbout the monthly
Water Level bulletinJanuary Precipitation
Over the Great
LakesAs a percentage of
the long-term January
average:Great Lakes 150%
BasinLake Erie 100%
(including
Lake St.
Clair)Lake 132%
SuperiorLakes 180%
Michigan-
Huron

Lake Ontario 140%

* Record High

LEVEL news

Great Lakes St. Lawrence River Water Levels

**Volume 5, Number 2****February 7, 1997****Above Average Precipitation Amounts Continued****High Great Lakes Water Levels Expected for Spring 1997**

Great Lakes water levels could be very high this spring. Concern over the situation is growing as there exists a significant risk of serious shoreline flood and erosion damage.

January was the sixth month out of the past eight with above average precipitation. This was a continuation of the conditions experienced during 1996, which was the fifth wettest year this century over the Great Lakes Basin.

The fall and early winter months are usually a period during which levels of the lakes decline, but wet conditions have slowed this year's decline. Lakes Huron and Erie's levels typically drop by about 30 cm from July to January, but this year Lake Huron only declined 5 cm over the period, while Lake Erie's level decreased by just over 10 cm.

At the end of January, Lakes Huron and Erie levels were 45 to 55 cm higher than average for that time of year. Both lakes experienced a slight increase in levels over the past month. Despite this increase, they were still about 30 to 40 cm below record high levels. Lake Superior's level, about 25 cm above average, is expected to continue to decline for a few more weeks. Meanwhile, Lake Ontario's level (currently 32 cm above average) has been rising slowly since December, and indications are that this trend will continue.

If wet conditions should continue over the next six months, this spring's levels on all lakes except Ontario could be within 10 to 20 cm of the record highs established in the mid 1980's, and this summer's levels could be within 10 cm of the record highs.

IJC Takes Measures to Deal With High Lake Ontario Levels

Concern over above average levels and continuing high supplies of water to Lake Ontario led the International Joint Commission to invoke Criterion (k) in the regulation of the outflows of Lake Ontario on January 17. By this measure, the IJC places a priority on providing relief to shoreline property owners on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River as far downstream as Montreal.

Note: These figures are preliminary.

Last Issue

Next Issue

Issue Index

Summary information for
"LEVELnews"

Under Criterion (k) operations, the IJC's International St. Lawrence River Board of Control will direct maximum possible outflows when appropriate without causing downstream flooding.

Prior to the implementation of Criterion (k), the Board had frequently deviated from the regulation plan over the past several months in an effort to alleviate water level concerns. Flows were much higher than those specified by the plan between December 26, when the St. Lawrence Seaway closed for the winter, and January 8, when ice formation started. To promote formation of a stable ice cover and prevent ice jams, the Board reduced Lake Ontario outflows on January 8, and subsequently increased the flow gradually as the ice cover strengthened.

As of January 29, deviations from Lake Ontario's regulation plan has lowered the lake's level by 31 cm from that which would have occurred through strict adherence to the plan, and the lake's level was 59 cm lower than it would have been under natural conditions (i.e. with no regulation of water levels).

Lake St. Clair Level Rises Quickly

Water levels on Lake St. Clair rose by over 30 cm between the 7th and the 17th of January. This rapid rise in levels was caused by a build-up of ice in the Detroit River, particularly in the Livingstone Channel and north of Fighting Island. Ice breakers were dispatched to keep the ice moving downstream, and by the end of January the lake's level had declined by 17 cm. Levels in the St. Clair River also increased in response to the rise on Lake St. Clair. Local agencies reported receiving many calls from concerned residents.

Public Meetings

The annual public meetings of the International Lake Superior Board of Control and the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control alternate between Canada and the United States. This year, the Boards have tentatively selected Thunder Bay and Brockville, respectively, for their meeting locations. We will update you in the next issue.

Top of Page

[Français](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Help](#) | [Search](#) | [Canada Site](#)
[What's New](#) | [Topics](#) | [Publications](#) | [Weather](#) | [Home](#) | [About Us](#)

part of Environment Canada's Green Lane™

Webmaster

Last Updated: 2001-04-02

Last Reviewed: 2001-04-02

Important Notices and Disclaimers

URL: <http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/water/level-news/lvn97feb.html>

tml



